

Bush, Gorbachev trying to avoid head-on collision

President Bush has good reason to use caution in the showdown between Lithuania and the Soviet Union, said **Carl Linden**, professor of international affairs and political science at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

"The Bush administration is trying to avoid one of the classic collisions in American foreign policy — the collision between the democratic principles on which the USA has been founded and tremendously great foreign-policy interests."

But Bush won't hold off forever if things get worse, Linden said.

"If Gorbachev continues to press very hard on Lithuania and moves from the kind of intimidation that he's using now — economic and some military moves — we will be forced to become more and more open in our position that this is intolerable."

"I think both the Bush administration and Gorbachev, himself, are trying to avoid that."

So the cards are basically in Gorbachev's hands, Linden said. And Gorbachev has a dilemma before him that Linden called a "mission impossible."

"On the TV program *Mission Impossible*, it was always a mission that could be carried out, but it was extremely difficult. That's what it seems to me that Gorbachev is up against. It's becoming more and more impossible as time goes on."

"The Soviet Union calls itself a federation of republics, but it is, in fact, an empire which is the result of a conquest and not a result of a voluntary association of the various republics."

While Gorbachev has been trying to work toward reform and has looked to the West as a model, he's also trying to hold onto control of the Soviet Union, Linden explained.

"He's worried about losing his control and that if Lithuania goes, then so goes the Soviet empire."

"Gorbachev is going to try his best to avoid pushing things too far in Lithuania. He's walking a tightrope there."



Carl Linden

— **Wendy Buchert**